Impact and Implications of Historical Trauma and Intergenerational Issues on Family Dynamics

Michael N. Martin, NACS’ Executive Director
Pete Hill, NACS’ Health and Wellness Director

Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS), Buffalo / Niagara Falls, New York
Session Overview

✧ Socio-Cultural Model of HIV Prevention

✧ Native American Experience & Consequences

✧ “Healing in Volumes” Approach to Health & Wellness
Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc. (NACS)

1975-2010: 35 Years in a Tradition of Caring

Family Services
Economic Self-Sufficiency
Youth Services
Health & Wellness
Community Support Services

Serving the Off-Reservation
Native American Community & Friends

"Getting to the Root of It" -- November 9, 2009
In providing services for Native Americans, the NACS Health and Wellness Component utilizes the

**Socio-Cultural Model of HIV Prevention***

*As developed by the New York State HIV Prevention Planning Group (PPG), c. 1999*
**Socio-Cultural Model of HIV Prevention**

- **Historical Underpinnings** = events that happened previously & that continue to impact the community in some way(s)

- **External Factors** = dynamics, influences, or effects on the community that are outside of the control and/or origin of the community

- **Cultural Norms** = how the community members treat each other & non-members

And, these issues must be identified & interpreted by members of the community
Residential Boarding Schools & Native Americans
Impact of Residential Boarding Schools within Native American Families & Communities

→ Language

→ Culture

→ Alcohol & Health Problems

→ Family Dynamics & Parenting Skills

→ Sexual, Physical, Emotional Abuse

→ Pride, Self-Esteem, Self-Worth
ALCOHOL ABUSE, FOSTER CARE, ADDICTIONS,
DIABETES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, OBESITY, ASTHMA,
CANCER, STDs, SUICIDE, DEATHS FROM DRUNK
DRIVING ACCIDENTS, HIV, ELDER ABUSE, CHILD
ABUSE, GANG INVOLVEMENT, INCARCERATION,
HOMELESSNESS, TEENAGE PREGNANCIES, INHALANTS,
POVERTY, SIDS, NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGES, STEREOTYPES,
HEART DISEASE, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES…
AND MANY OF THESE ISSUES ARE INTERGENERATIONAL

YET MOST APPROACHES ARE SHORT-TERM,

FOCUSED ON ONLY ONE PROBLEM AREA,

AND/OR

DO NOT RECOGNIZE HOW PEOPLE ARE IMPACTED BY COMMUNITY HISTORY
...new, culturally appropriate approaches are needed
“Healing In Volumes”

A Shift In Our Thinking & Approach

from only focusing on HIV, foster care, or any singular issue in physical health

to include emotional, mental, & spiritual health,

and…
“Healing In Volumes”

A Shift In Our Thinking & Approach..

to also include an understanding of the community’s dynamics, history, assets, needs, & culture(s)

and

how individuals are impacted emotionally, mentally, & spiritually as well as physically
The “Healing In Volumes” approach means

→ to empower people to learn, understand, & process how all these factors have influenced the health & wellness of themselves, their family and/or their community(-ies)

→ to offer & support a process of healing in comprehensive, culturally appropriate manner for community members & friends as desired
Outcome of “Healing In Volumes”

People will be empowered to make healthier decisions for themselves, their families, and their communities.
The “Healing In Volumes” Approach

Step 1 → Know (Identify) community
Step 2 → Apply S-C Model
Step 3 → Assess Readiness
Step 4 → Share, Care, & Plan
Step 5 → Offer Healing Efforts
Step 6 → Maintain & Enhance
Focus of healing efforts

→ help people to understand their own personal, family’s, & community’s history and dynamics

→ in order to help stop the cycles of inter-generational dysfunction

→ healing efforts can manifest in many ways, as determined by a community
The need for “healing” may not be readily accepted by the community and/or outside entities.

There may be fear, defensiveness, denial, rage, resistance, and/or outright hostility.
Some people may not be aware of the full impact of history

Many people have been seriously wounded yet may never have recognized or considered it
Some people have developed strong coping skills to live in their reality, many of which may not be “healthy” but may be fully entrenched in a family or community.

Some people may feel that they have already dealt with these issues.
“Healing” may be an intensely personal activity

“Healing” could also generate some resurfacing of deep, long-standing wounds
If staff are peers and/or from the community, dynamics of the community need to be understood (on personal, family, & community levels)

We cannot promote the health & wellness of others if we’re not healthy & well

As staff, we may have same or similar issues as the people we’re trying to help
Healing in Volumes—The Approach

step 1 → know community
step 2 → apply S-C Model
step 3 → assess community readiness
step 4 → share, care, & plan
step 5 → offer healing efforts
step 6 → maintain & enhance
Recent NACS’ Efforts

“Healing Our People through Empowerment” (HOPE Project)

“Impact of the Residential Boarding Schools in the Native Community”

Celebration of Wellbrietry & AA meetings
Healing in Volumes
Approach to
HIV Prevention

Greater Movement
toward
Health & Wellness
Recommendations

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☑ Understand each person is an individual, some aspects of this discussion may or may not relate

☑ Allow for exploration of deeper issues, not just symptoms of dysfunction or superficial approaches

☑ Tap into community resources & assets

☑ Address historical underpinnings in service plans as much as possible
Recommendations

⊕ Explore Socio-Cultural Model for a given community

⊕ Get more information on the "Healing In Volumes" approach

⊕ Native American Cultural Competency training, November 19, 2009

⊕ Channel 09 Stories of the Niagara Frontier, December 6, 2009
Nyah-Weh!